

**ILLINOIS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE REPORT**  
**2012 Drought Response Task Force**  
August 9, 2012

**Illinois Weather and Crop Conditions**

Please refer to attached report.

**Senator Durbin Round Table Discussion**

Director Robert Flider participated in a roundtable meeting sponsored by Senator Richard Durbin at the Yuton Elevator near Carlock on Monday, August 6. Senator Durbin reiterated the need for the next edition of the US Farm Bill to be passed as soon as possible to assist producers suffering drought related damages. Also discussed were the significant impacts that sectors other than agriculture will incur due to the severe drought. Additionally, livestock producers indicated they definitely favor the haying and grazing of filter strips on land enrolled in the Conservation Reserve Program. They believe the grass contained in the filter strips is some of the most nutritious currently available. They also feel that the grass will recover quick enough to still provide the conservation benefits that filter strips normally generate.

**Town Hall Meetings**

The Department participated in 2 town hall meetings (Winchester and Pittsfield) on Monday, July 30 sponsored by Senator Sam McCann and Representative Jim Watson to receive public feedback on IDOT's recent closure of the Illinois River Bridge at Florence. IDOT representatives were present to answer questions. As a secondary issue, both legislators requested the Department's presence to provide a drought update and to answer any drought-related questions. The audience had numerous questions about the status of the drought and federal/state programs that will provide disaster assistance.

**Illinois Emergency Management Agency Briefing**

The Department provided a drought briefing to the members (federal /state agencies/NGOs) of the State Incident Response Center (SIRC) at the Illinois Emergency Management Agency on Thursday, August 2.

**US Farm Bill Legislation**

The Department is currently monitoring Congressional and US Senate action on possible legislation for a short term extension to the current US Farm Bill containing key disaster related provisions that would provide relief to crop and livestock producers affected by the severe drought conditions.

**Interagency Coordination**

The Department continues to closely coordinate with the USDA Farm Service Agency on the Secretarial Disaster Designation, Conservation Reserve Program Emergency Haying and Grazing and other USDA emergency programs. All updates have been uploaded to [drought.illinois.gov](http://drought.illinois.gov)